5: Nicolaisen E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1959
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groups of Northern Tuareg and Arab tribes of the Sahara. Punishments for theft are said to have been very severe. A thief who had not stolen previously was put into jail in Agadez; if he stole again after his release one of his hands was cut off, while for a third theft the penalty was capital punishment said to be carried out at the market place of Agadez in a very cruel way:- pointed sticks were placed under the man's armpits, under his chin, and under the back of his head so that he would die when no longer capable of keeping standing. Punitive measures as imprisonment and capital punishment are no doubt foreign to traditional Tuareg law and were in all probability originally practised by the Sultan. As the drum-chief of the Kel Ferouan was in fact the true master of Air, including the city of Agadez, he may have made use of the prison as he may have imposed capital punishment on thieves. But proper theft is very rare among pastoral Tuareg.

Even vassal Tuareg say that the drum-chief could be very strict and severe with them in the past. But here it should be remembered that there were limits to his power as he could not refuse his subjects the right of blood-revenge. It should also be reiterated that the drum-chief was elected by his vassals, who could also dismiss him. And strictness or severeness with his vassals was not the drum-chief's normal way of conduct. Like other noble Tuareg he would not only associate with the vassals on intimate terms, but he would also joke with them. A joking relationship similar to that of cross-cousins and of brothers and sisters-in-law, including sham-fights and minor "thefts", existed between all noble Tuareg and all vassals of the Kel Ferouan group. They would joke with each other unless there were a great difference in age. But although joking was reciprocal it is said that the drum-chief could stop joking, in which case the vassals would "be afraid of him". I have already referred to the theory that the social function of joking between cross-cousins and in-laws seems to be the prevention of conflicts. The function of joking between people of different classes is similar, and this should be the more emphasized as this very explanation has frequently been given me by the Tuareg. "People who are different tease each other to prevent troubles", they say. For this very reason there was joking between noble Tuareg and vassals, but joking between members of these two different Tuareg classes did not occur unless they belonged to the same drum-group. Thus there would be no joking between vassals of the Kel Ferouan group and noble Tuareg of the Kel Fadei. In this latter case there would be avoidance or strict reserve.

It [illegible] that marriages between noble Tuareg and vassals would not take place in t[illegible] This is not entirely true, but they seem to have been rare. I think that one reason for this may be due to the fact that marriages between noble Tuareg and their vassals would tend to break down the structure of the political system. By such marriages the noble Tuareg, including the drum-chief, would acquire a great many relatives-in-law to whom the conduct would be avoidance or institutionally constant joking. For in addition to true in-laws there are numerous classificatory in-laws. Thus a man (or a woman) has all spouses of his brothers and sisters and